

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan
January 13, 2023

President Biden. Fumio, they like you. *[Laughter]*

Prime Minister Kishida. Thank you.

President Biden. Well, Mr. Prime Minister, it's great to see you again and welcome—to be able to welcome such a close friend to the Oval Office again. And you know, we meet at a remarkable moment in our alliance. I can honestly say—more as a student of history than a participant—that it's been—I don't think there's ever been a time when we've been closer to Japan in the United States.

[At this point, the President addressed the interpreter.]

I'll stop so you can translate.

Last year in Japan, you said to me, and I quote, "We are two nations that share fundamental values." I couldn't agree with you more. We are.

These shared democratic values are the source of our strength, the source of our alliance, and the source of our being able to deliver for all our people.

We're modernizing our military alliance, building on Japan's historic increase in defense spending and new national security strategy.

Let me be crystal clear: The United States is fully, thoroughly, completely committed to the alliance and, more importantly, to Japan's defense—the defense of Japan.

We're working closely on tech and economic issues, including the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

And we're stepping up to hold Putin accountable for his unprovoked war in Ukraine. And I want to thank you—thank you—for your strong leadership on this from the very first—the very first—conversation we had on this.

Today I'm looking forward to how we can continue advancing our shared goals and values, including at the G-7 summit in Japan and the APEC in San Francisco later this year.

Rather than figuring out how we can work more closely together, a more difficult job would be trying to figure out how and where we disagree.

You're a real leader, and you're a real friend.

Prime Minister Kishida. Well, Joe, thank you so much for those warm words of welcome.

As we enter the new year of 2023, I am pleased to make my first visit to Washington, DC, as Prime Minister and to have this meeting with you, Joe, my dear friend.

Last year—or starting with your visit to Japan in May, we were able to accomplish so much for our peace and security in the region and prosperity in the region and the international community through numerous meetings, not just our bilateral summit meetings, but also the Quad meetings, the Japan-U.S.-R.O.K. trilaterals, among others. And I'm sincerely grateful for your cooperation, Joe.

And Japan and the United States are currently facing the most challenging and complex security environment in recent history. And in order to ensure our peace and prosperity in the

region and to contribute to that and also safeguard peace and security of Japan, in late last year, Japan formulated a new national security strategy.

And in so doing, the—Japan decided to fundamentally reinforcing our defense capabilities, including in possessing the counterstrike capabilities, and in order to ensure that, increased our defense budget. And this new policy was set forth by Japan, and I believe that this will be beneficial for the deterrence capabilities and response capabilities of the alliance as well.

And, Joe, as you rightly pointed out, I too feel that the role to be played by Japan and the United States—which share the fundamental values such as democracy and the rule of law—the role that we are to play is becoming even greater.

And today I very much look forward to having a candid exchange of views with you, Joe, on the various important topics, including a free and open Indo-Pacific, the G–7, APEC, as well as climate change.

President Biden. I look forward to it as well. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. Prime Minister Kishida spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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